

PRO BONO VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES FOR IN-HOUSE COUNSEL IN THE CHICAGO AREA

Attorneys practicing in-house are making important contributions to pro bono and access to justice. Legal aid and pro bono programs offer pro bono opportunities that are realistic, interesting and meaningful to in-house counsel. In addition, 2013 amendments to Illinois Supreme Court Rule 716 allow attorneys licensed under that rule to perform pro bono service without any additional registration or affiliation requirements.

Some sample opportunities that have been successful for corporate counsel are included below. Many more opportunities that may be of interest are included in the [CBF Guide to Pro Bono Opportunities](#). In-house counsel may contact any of the organizations listed in Guide to learn more or to get involved. In addition, the CBF can help develop and strengthen in-house pro bono programs, connect you with law firms and others who can help you get involved, and help you find opportunities that are a good fit for you. Please contact Samira Nazem at snazem@chicagobar.org or 312-554-8356 for more information or assistance getting involved.

TRANSACTIONAL LEGAL ASSISTANCE

Volunteer attorneys provide non-litigation, and business law representation to community-based organizations in low-income neighborhoods of the Greater Chicago Metropolitan Area. These clients are involved in a wide range of community development and social service activities.

Volunteers also provide business law services to low-income clients starting and operating small businesses and to low-income first-time home buyers.

Organization: Community Law Project (www.clccrul.org/community-law-project/)

Practice areas: Corporate, tax, real estate, employment, finance, governance, and intellectual property

Opportunity type: Non-litigation, transactional

Skills acquired: Case management, client interviewing, client counseling, negotiating, writing/drafting

Skills required: This opportunity relies on volunteers who have some experience in the subject matter or law firm support.

Time commitment: 5-30 hours, typically over a few months

Contact: Jody Adler at jadler@clccrul.org or 312.202-3647

Training and support: Community Law Project does not offer training for this volunteer opportunity but does provide volunteers with ongoing support.

ATTORNEY INTAKE PROGRAM

Volunteer attorneys interview potential clients at CGLA offices and partner organization in Chicago. Following intake interviews, volunteers attend the weekly intake meeting at CGLA's office to present the potential client's information to staff, volunteers, and interns.

At the intake meeting, all staff and volunteers vote on which cases to accept, refer to other sources, or provide advice.

Organization: Cabrini Green Legal Aid (www.cgla.net)

Practice areas: General civil practice

Opportunity type: Non-representation, client intake/interview

Skills acquired: Client/witness interviewing

Skills required: All attorneys are competent to handle this matter after the training provided.

Time commitment: Each intake requires 4 hours, including the interview and intake meeting.

After training, volunteers are asked to commit to completing 3 intakes on their own.

Contact: Eric Zopf at ericzopf@cgla.net or 312.374.6191

Training and support: Volunteers attend a 2-hour orientation session at CGLA's office and then observe three intake sessions and the corresponding intake meeting before conducting intake interviews independently. CGLA's volunteer coordinator and staff attorneys provide support to volunteers.

SENIOR CENTER INITIATIVE (SCI)

CDEL staff and volunteer attorneys prepare Powers of Attorney for Health Care and Property, as well as Illinois Living Will Declarations for low-income seniors at senior centers throughout Cook County. This is a one-day workshop with limited client engagement and is great for law firm and corporate client partnerships.

Organization: Center for Disability & Elder Law (www.cdela.org)

Practice areas: Estate planning

Opportunity type: Non-litigation, transactional

Skills acquired: Client interviewing, basic estate planning

Skills required: All attorneys are competent to handle this matter after the training provided.

Time commitment: Completion of required training (1.5 hrs.) and at least one 3-hour workshop

Contact: Thomas Wendt at twendt@cdela.org or 312.376.1880

Training and support: CDEL provides trainings (1.5 hrs.) on an as-needed basis. Trainings usually take place at CDEL but can also be conducted on-site upon request.

PRO BONO VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES FOR IN-HOUSE COUNSEL IN THE CHICAGO AREA, CONTINUED

EXPUNGEMENT AND SEALING HELP DESKS

Volunteers conduct criminal history research and provide consultations to individuals seeking to clear their criminal records through expungement and sealing. Volunteers meet with clients, read their criminal history or RAP sheets, determine their eligibility for relief, and help them file the necessary paperwork. The desk at the Daley Center is open Monday through Thursday from 9:00 am to 12:30 pm and Thursday from 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm. The desk at the Markham Courthouse is open on Wednesdays from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm.

Organization: Cabrini Green Legal Aid (www.cgla.net)

Practice areas: Expungement, sealing and other forms of criminal records relief

Opportunity type: Non-litigation, self-help desks

Skills acquired: Client counseling, client/witness interviewing

Skills required: All attorneys are competent to handle this matter after the training provided.

Time commitment: Completion of required training (4 hrs). Volunteers are then asked to commit to completing a minimum of six 3.5-hour sessions working at a Help Desk over 6 months, which can be scheduled at the volunteer's convenience.

Contact: Eric Zopf at ericzopf@cgla.net or 312.374.6191

Training and support: Volunteers are required to complete a two-part training orientation at CGLA's office (each training part is 2 hrs. — Total of 4 hours over 2 evenings) prior to volunteering. The volunteer coordinator and staff attorneys support volunteers.

REPRESENT IMMIGRANT SURVIVORS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND OTHER CRIMES

Under the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), immigrant survivors of domestic abuse may file a Self-Petition to obtain an immigration status in the U.S. Under the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Prevention Act (VTVPA). U.S. immigration law also offers protection called a U Visa to non-citizen victims of certain serious crimes who have gathered the courage to come forward, report the crime, and assist in its investigation or prosecution. In both VAWA Self-Petitions and U Visa applications, volunteer attorneys prepare relevant applications for immigrant survivors of domestic violence and other serious crimes. Volunteer attorneys meet with the client on several occasions and prepare the relevant documentation. VAWA and U Visa cases generally do not require litigation and may sometimes have filing deadlines.

Organization: National Immigrant Justice Center (www.immigrantjustice.org)

Practice areas: Immigration

Opportunity type: Non-litigation, legal representation

Skills acquired: Case management, client counseling, client/witness interviewing, writing/drafting, advocacy

Skills required: All attorneys are competent to handle this matter after the training provided.

Time commitment: Completion of required 90-minute training, then approximately 20–30 hours of casework over 3–4 months

Contact: Ellen Miller at emiller@heartlandalliance.org or 312.660.1415

Training and support: Although there are training webcasts and PowerPoint presentations available to view on the website, interested pro bono attorneys are required to attend an in-person VAWA or U Visa training before being assigned a case. The training typically lasts about 90 minutes.

SPECIAL EDUCATION CLINIC HELPLINE

Volunteers provide legal information and advice to parents of children with disabilities about special education law, help parents draft letters, and conduct legal research on special education issues.

Organization: Equip for Equality (www.equipforequality.org)

Practice areas: Special Education

Opportunity type: Non-representation, legal hotline, client intake/interviewing/advice

Skills acquired: Client counseling, client/witness interviewing

Skills required: All attorneys are competent to handle this matter after the training provided.

Time commitment: Completion of required training (1.5 hrs.) and then 4-hour shifts, followed by a telephone meeting with the intake manager. Volunteers are asked to commit to ongoing participation in the program.

Contact: Olga Pribyl at olga@equipforequality.org or 312.895.7321

Training and support: Volunteers must complete a 1.5 hour in-person or online training on special education law. EFE attorneys provide ongoing support.

PRO BONO VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES FOR IN-HOUSE COUNSEL IN THE CHICAGO AREA, CONTINUED

SNAP PRO BONO PROJECT

Volunteers help clients obtain the proper amount of SNAP (food stamp) benefits when they have been improperly denied benefits, do not receive the correct amount of benefits, or have their benefits reduced or terminated.

Organization: LAF (www.lafchicago.org)

Practice areas: Food programs, public benefits

Opportunity type: Negotiation

Skills acquired: Case management, client and witness interviewing, client counseling, negotiating, subject matter experience

Skills required: All attorneys are competent to handle this matter after the training provided.

Time commitment: Volunteers are expected to commit 4-10 hours over 2 months.

Contact: Melissa Picciola at mpicciola@lafchicago.org or 312.347.8338

Training and support: Training is offered once or twice a year. Volunteers receive a comprehensive reference manual and will represent clients under a staff attorney who will answer any questions that arise during the representation.

SMALL BUSINESS COUNSELING

Volunteer attorneys assist clients in state incorporation and other start-up matters. Volunteers gain experience filing articles of incorporation, drafting shareholders and operating agreements, and advising on corporate formalities. Volunteers may also provide counseling and representation in real estate, intellectual property, zoning, licensing, vendor and other technology agreements, internet commerce, First Amendment, immigration and all other matters that may confront small and mid-size businesses and non-profits.

Organization: Lawyers for the Creative Arts (www.law-arts.org)

Practice areas: Corporate

Opportunity type: Transactional

Skills acquired: Case management, client counseling

Skills required: This opportunity relies on attorneys with experience in the subject matter.

Time commitment: 10-30 hours, dependent upon the business structure selected

Contact: Stacy Streur at sstreur@law-arts.org or 312-837-3520

Training and support: Volunteers receive training through our expanding video law library, and other online legal resources, as well as some mentoring opportunities through experienced volunteers and LCA staff.

DRAFTING AND REVIEWING CONTRACTS

Volunteer attorneys review, revise, draft and/or negotiate arts and entertainment contracts. Typical contracts are copyright and trademark protection, licensing and assignments.

Organization: Lawyers for the Creative Arts (www.law-arts.org)

Practice areas: Arts and entertainment, contracts, employment, intellectual property

Opportunity type: Non-litigation, transactional

Skills acquired: Client counseling, contract drafting, negotiation

Skills required: This opportunity relies upon attorneys with basic corporate, transactional, or intellectual property subject matter experience.

Time commitment: 5-25 hours

Contact: Stacy Streur at sstreur@law-arts.org or 312-837-3520

Training and support: Volunteers receive training through our expanding video law library, and other online legal resources, as well as some mentoring opportunities through experienced volunteers and LCA staff.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY PROTECTION

Volunteers advise clients regarding potential intellectual property claims – whether as claimant or respondent. Typical initial referral will be limited to evaluation, and assessment of claim/defense followed by possible representation, if necessary and advisable. Typical issues involve non-payment of royalties, payments on art consignment agreements, recovery of consigned art work, assignment/termination of various agreements.

Organization: Lawyers for the Creative Arts (www.law-arts.org)

Practice areas: Commercial litigation, arbitration, mediation, intellectual property, arts and entertainment

Opportunity type: Non-litigation, transactional matters, IP litigation, mediation/arbitration

Skills acquired: Client counseling, drafting, negotiation, trial skills

Skills required: Attorneys with commercial litigation or subject matter knowledge are preferred for this opportunity but attorneys can also acquire necessary knowledge through provided resources.

Time commitment: Many LCA matters involving commercial disputes are amenable to resolution through negotiation and in extreme cases, mediation or arbitration.

Contact: Stacy Streur at sstreur@law-arts.org or 312-837-3520

Training and support: Volunteers receive training through our expanding video law library, and other online legal resources, as well as some mentoring opportunities through experienced volunteers and LCA staff.